

| | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------|
| MediaTitle | Sunday Mail | | |
| Date | 02 Jul 2017 | Language | English |
| Circulation | 100,000 | Readership | 300,000 |
| Section | Top News | Color | Full Color |
| Page No | 8 | ArticleSize | 195 cm ² |
| AdValue | RM 2,228 | PR Value | RM 6,684 |
| | | | |



Students use coconut shells to help needy

KUALA LUMPUR — Heaps of discarded coconut shells caught the attention of a group of Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) students in Kedah, prompting them to take the initiative to recycle the “worthless” garbage as charcoal.

UUM’s Co&Coal project director Ho Cia Chen, 23, said coconut shells were usually thrown away indiscriminately due to lack of proper disposal: “We believe our initiative may help the rural community in Kedah to generate additional income and reduce environmental pollution.

“The project started in September 2014 and our team of 26 students from different streams conducted research and

development (R&D) for six months before moving ahead more seriously. We also shared information with experts from the United States and Australia.

“Co&Coal focuses on discarded coconut shells and transforms them into marketable products,” he told Bernama when contacted recently.

The project, under UUM’s Enactus programme and run by international non-profit organisations in collaboration with about 1,600 higher education institutions in 39 countries around the world, aims to mobilise students to undertake community projects, in addition to building their social responsibility skills.

Ho said the process of producing coconut shell charcoal was easy, but required a lot of energy.

“There are four stages of production, firstly, heating the coconut shells for about two hours for the carbonisation process and the grinding of the shell to make fine charcoal powder.

“It then goes through a moulding process, where the charcoal powder will be blended with corn flour and put in the mould, and finally the drying process under the sunlight...it’s that easy,” he said.

The business administration student said Co&Coal was currently working with a woman from Lembah Bujang, Kedah, known as Mak Su, in a pilot project to help raise her family’s income.

“Her husband only earns RM1,500 and it is not enough to cover daily expenses, so Mak Su’s involvement in this project has been successful as she is able to produce coconut shell charcoal and sell it for RM12 per three kilogrammes,” said Ho.

He added that Co&Coal had the potential to thrive, and expected more parties, including government agencies, non-governmental organisations and private individuals to invest in the project.
— Bernama